

THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

Serving Our Communities Since 1965

Deborah Monahan, Executive Director



**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 522-
AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR ELDERLY NUTRITION
Aging Committee Hearing
February 5, 2013**

Good Morning. My name is Deborah Monahan. I am the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, serving Southeastern Connecticut. TVCCA has operated the Senior Nutrition Program also known as the Elderly Nutrition Program for over 37 years. We serve congregate and Meals on Wheels participants in New London County as well as Tolland and Windham Counties. In addition, we provide energy assistance and other support services, senior companion and RSVP opportunities to seniors in our community.

I am sorry that I am not able to testify in person, but would like to offer testimony in support of SB 522, *An Act Increasing Funding for Elderly Nutrition*. This bill proposes \$3.7 million of state monies for the program.

This funding is very important during these difficult economic times. Seniors on fixed incomes are having a hard time making ends meet. Food, oil and electricity for their homes, gas for their cars, and prescription drug costs are continuing to rise. Food costs alone have increased over 12% in the past few years. Social security and pension increases have not keep up with these rising costs.

I know that the budget decisions going forward will be very difficult. The money provided in this bill is for meals to seniors and that is a basic need that many seniors have come to depend upon to help stretch their fixed incomes. These dollars will enable the elderly nutrition programs to continue to provide meals to seniors in a congregate setting, ie senior center, senior housing and support the home delivered meals to the frail elderly. TVCCA currently serves close to 2000 seniors daily in these two programs across 36 towns.

The "Meals on Wheels" program provides an additional support service that helps frail seniors remain in their homes delaying costly and premature admissions to nursing homes and we know that a significant costs savings. Just as significant is the fact that the Meals on

Wheels program enables the senior to stay in their own home and part of their community as long as possible which is what they really wish for in their later years of life.

I strongly urge you to support SB 522 and the critical funding it will provide to the elderly nutrition program and the thousands of seniors it will assist.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Deborah Monahan
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